

PARAGON 22

Chapter 22 - 22: Informed

While flying towards his residence, Wei Wuyin came to know about the shocking reappearance of the tens of thousands of cultivators that went missing. Supposedly, they were all found unconscious in a long-forgotten underground tunnel network. The tunnels exuded a natural gas that could influence humans and have them undergo a hibernation of sorts, placing them in a stasis-like state.

So while they were unconscious for months, some even a full six months, they were only a little malnourished and drowsy. It left one shocked because there was still no explanation as to why and how they got there.

When interrogated, their responses were all the same. They only remember falling into darkness and then waking up. That was it.

It was a great mystery that rumbled the country.

The three sects then left, returning to their domains, and continuing to monitor the situation in case something like this happened again. Luckily, no one was hurt or killed.

Wei Wuyin knew that the black skeleton had stolen them, likely even taken the positive karmic value they've accumulated in their lifetimes and gave it to him. He had a strange feeling that these people might suffer a series of catastrophic events down the line.

They soon arrived at his residence.

He felt an odd sensation in his heart. This place had been his home for over three years, but he felt a sense of distance from it. Despite that, he still referred to it as home. Thinking up to here, his heart felt heavy as memories of his family flashed through his mind.

The sound of wings battering the wind roared to life behind them. Wei Wuyin turned around and saw a white crane soaring through the skies carrying two people. One of them was an exceptionally beautiful mature woman with faint traces of frost exuding from her hair. The other was a young girl who looked somewhat pale and malnourished.

"Elder Bing? Xing Fu..."

The pair landed next to his crane. Wei Wuyin was about to offer greetings when a figure shot towards him like the wind. His reaction was great, as his eyes narrowed and his qi readied for retaliation, but he didn't do anything. His spiritual sense saw the image of a girl in tears lunging towards him with wide arms.

"This?!" Shocked, he let Xing Fu embrace him. Her arms wrapped around his torso tightly and the hot tears seeped through his scarlet robes.

Elder Bing watched this with a helpless expression. Du Ling stepped back and let Wei Wuyin and Xing Fu have their moment. He didn't know much about Xing Fu, except she was a core disciple and disciple of Elder Bing, but seeing this made his mind wander.

The sound of muffled sobbing and wailing was all Wei Wuyin could hear. At first, he didn't know how to react, but for some reason, his heart felt warm knowing someone cared so much about his return. He embraced this average-looking girl and softly comforted, "It's okay. I'm fine."

He had this belief that Xing Fu had a crush on him, but he didn't think it was this strong. If it wasn't for his powerful body, her tight grip could've bruised his skin.

The sobbing lasted for several minutes before it abruptly ceased. Before he knew it, Xing Fu had fallen asleep in his arms. Her body had reached a state of worry and peak exhaustion that the moment she knew he was alright, she had collapsed.

He lifted her in a bridal carry and used his shoulder and neck region as a resting area for her head. Looking at Elder Bing, he could see the relief in her eyes.

She walked over, "I'm relieved that you're safe. I don't know what happened to you before, but it concerned many. The Sect Leader even sent a search party out for you. That's a rarity."

Wei Wuyin was somewhat shocked by the Sect Leader's actions, but when he thought about it, it made sense. He revealed his exceptional talent and thus his value. While resources can be accumulated with time, top-tier talent required luck to obtain. Especially for a sect.

"I apologize for leaving abruptly. It was not my intention." Wei Wuyin felt it was sufficient to at least state this, albeit wholly unnecessary. With his status, he had no need to be polite or offer apologies to a Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation Core Elder of the sect. Whether in value, status, or cultivation base, he exceeded her several times over in the eyes of everyone.

Elder Bing was taken aback, but smiled in the end. Her normally icy expression seemed to have melted, revealing her incredible beauty. Even Du Ling was awed by that smile of hers.

"You want to take her?" Wei Wuyin asked.

Elder Bing pondered for a bit and nodded. She also said, "She was the one who requested you for the mission. That little girl hoped to get your attention and connect with you in some way. You should know her thoughts now."

Wei Wuyin stilled. "So she was the one, huh?" According to the black skeleton, it had altered his fate to meet him. Originally, he shouldn't have left the sect so soon. It had factored in this girl's personality and will to lure him away.

That's why it was incomparably suspicious. It was a scheme, a scheme of love. He chuckled softly to himself, shaking his head. No wonder she was worried about him. She must've blamed herself.

He looked towards this sleeping girl in his arms and sighed. He owed her one, maybe even the entire sect owed her, so if she felt that he was worthy, he'll take her as his woman for as long as she desired. This was a promise he had made to himself.

"I understand." He carefully handed her to Elder Bing. They soon took off to return to their own residence.

He watched as they left his senses. A wave of emotions emerged in his heart. He recalled his death and that figure with the black sword. A single swing of that sword left his body a little lighter.

"It's best I handle this before the calamity descends with no return," he thought to himself. He left Du Ling at his residence. Taking the white crane, he flew towards the true upper levels of the mountain. He was going to inform the Sect Leader or Ancestral Elder about Jiu Lang's actions and their possible fate.

At the top of the Scarlet Solaris Mountain was a grand palace reminiscent of immortal abodes of legends constructed of pure scarlet stones. It exuded an exceptionally fierce and aggressive aura that left one in awe and fear.

The scarlet qi roiled off the palace walls. It was so dense that the qi had transformed into a mist that flowed with the wind itself.

In this palace, a figure dressed in scarlet-colored robes befitting an emperor and a golden crown with a ruby embedded within. This ruby was like a neon object, shining ever brighter, effusing all sorts of light like a red sun. A dense aura of scarlet qi flowed around him naturally. This was Wu Xinghong, the Scarlet Solaris Sect's Ancestral Elder and lone Godlord figure.

The true pillar of the sect.

Around him were several grand elders, all of them having reached the God-level, the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation, False Reality Phase. There were eleven of them standing in discussion, with the Sect Leader acting as a core figure of said discussion.

The Sect Leader was not a man, but a woman. She wore a simple scarlet robe, had phoenix eyes, thin eyebrows, cherry lips, a lithe figure, and hair tied up in a bun. She exuded a natural aura of supremacy and authority as she talked.

"I've received word that Wei Wuyin has just returned. I've already called back the search team." Her voice was powerful, and only made one forced to listen.

However, a grand elder hastily added, "He's returned. That's great! We can now figure out what cultivation treasure he possesses and use it for the benefit of the sect." His words were alluring and tinted with greed, and many of the other elders had their eyes shine with faint desire.

Wei Wuyin was a nobody from a third-rate clan, subordinate to a second-rate sect that was just a subordinate of theirs. He entered the sect early and suddenly revealed an explosive rise in cultivation. Not many believed it was a treasure, but innate talent, until Jiu Lang started to spread rumors of a cultivation treasure.

The rumors seemed to be further validated by Wei Wuyin's birthing of two high-level elemental qi and reaching the Yang Growth Phase in his mid-twenties. Barely any of them could believe such rapid and astounding progress. He had to be the most talented individual ever since the Scarlet Solaris Sect's inception.

Now, very few believed that sheer innate talent contributed to his achievements. They attributed it to a cultivation treasure that could increase one's talent or potential. There were many records of objects like that existing. In fact, the Imperial Wu Clan had one, which was why the country was called the Wu Country.

In fact, Wu Xinghong, their Ancestral Elder, was a descendant of the Imperial Wu Clan and couldn't be any more familiar with cultivation treasures. If their sect had one, they could reach unprecedented heights. They may even create a few more Godlords!

The thought left many of them salivating. However, the Sect Leader, Su Linya, had other thoughts. "You think we haven't investigated the rumors? Both I and the Ancestral Elder have inspected him thoroughly. There is no cultivation treasure. In fact, his talent is purely his own."

Her words silenced them all. Of course! Even if Wei Wuyin had a cultivation treasure, the moment it was rumored, how could Wu Xinghong and Su Linya not investigate? If they couldn't find anything, then likely there was none.

However, this frightened a few of them. An elder skeptically said, "So he condensed two high-level elemental qi with talent alone?"

Su Linya shook her head. "The Ancestral Elder generously bestowed him three violet lightning crystals as a reward for his outstanding performance during the Core Disciple Competition. He had also found a thousand-year Steel Essence Source while out on a mission. With those two things, he birthed them."

"What?!" This brought an even greater uproar than before. Only three violet lightning crystals? With two, a person has a high chance of forming elemental lightning qi, but actually birthing violet lightning?! That's...

"I personally watched him during his mission hunting the Violet Moon Sect and while he cultivated in the Yang Yore Fields. With his talent, a bit of ingenuity, and luck, he reached his current cultivation without any foul play involved." Su Linya stated calmly. Since hearing of Jiu Lang's rumors, she had to make sure of the validity of it. Besides being a little lucky, Wei Wuyin had outstanding talent.

If Wei Wuyin heard this, he would be incredibly shocked! Perhaps even a little creeped out. However, more relieved than anything. With this being known, his status was essentially solidified and so was his importance to the sect.

"..." The grand elders all had various expressions, some intrigued at the prospect of Wei Wuyin's talent and the Scarlet Solaris Sect's future, others disappointed that he didn't have a cultivation treasure. It's not like they could steal one's comprehension or thoughts.

"Hm?" Su Linya looked towards the entrance suddenly. She waved her hand and the door to the room opened revealing a figure. With silver eyes, scarlet robes, and a steady aura, he announced himself.

"Core Disciple Wei Wuyin seeks an audience with Sect Leader."

The other grand elders turned towards Wei Wuyin. They weren't shocked that he arrived. If someone as outstanding as him didn't take initiative to meet the leaders of the sect, they would find it odd.

"Come." Su Linya beckoned for him to approach. Wei Wuyin did so immediately. He was completely calm despite arriving before the true top figures of the sect. Quite a few elders liked his stability and confidence, a few others with loose relations with Jiu Lang felt it was him being too confident.

Wu Xinghong inspected Wei Wuyin, and his eyes brightened imperceptibly. This child had actually birthed wood qi! He could feel the faint natural aura exuded. It seemed his elemental birth had been a recent endeavour, making it difficult to conceal from his gaze. He truly was a lucky one.

To birth metal, lightning, and wood! He must be pursuing a Heart of Elemental Qi! The very thought made Wu Xinghong place an even greater level of importance on Wei Wuyin. He was even considering using his own wealth to obtain high-level magma and ice essence sources. If Wei Wuyin actually established a Heart of Elemental Qi, he had a shot at becoming a true king.

"Seniors, if I may." Wei Wuyin greeted and politely requested to speak freely.

"Speak what's on your mind," Su Linya responded.

"Yes. Thank you, Sect Leader. While I was out, I discovered a piece of information that may bring a calamity to our sect." Wei Wuyin said confidently.

"What?! Calamity? What do you mean?" an elder immediately questioned but was interrupted by Su Linya.

"Let him speak!" After quieting the room, she gestured for Wei Wuyin to proceed. She took this very seriously. Wu Xinghong's eyes widened slightly. Wei Wuyin's words felt familiar to him.

"I learned that there was a person kidnapped by our sect's disciple who may be linked to a powerful force. I fear that a powerful force is looking for or already knows where that person is, and will soon be descending upon us swiftly."

At first, he was a little vague, but purposefully. He wanted to instigate questions and disbelief, and then they'll feel compelled to verify this.

Everyone frowned, and many wanted to speak, but no one did. They allowed him to continue.

"This person has emerald hair, eyes, and blood. It is a woman, and she was captured by Jiu Lang, a core disciple of our sect. It's possible that she is being held in the sect and may or may not already be dead."

"..." Those words were met with resounding silence.